

Happiness. I never really understood what it was. Is it all that fame and money? I thought they were. For me, I took materialistic gains as a form of happiness and took simple things in life, like love, for granted, never regarding it as something that would make me happy. Till one day, I realized I got it all wrong. Just like what Henry Wheeler Shaw said, "Money will buy you a pretty good dog, but it won't buy the wag of his tail." I came to know that money cannot buy many things in life, and only genuine love can evoke true happiness.

"I want to be a actress because I will be famous and I can make a lot of money just like mummy and daddy and then I can buy many things and I will be happy"- This was a diary entry that I had written before I turned seven. Yes, all my life I wanted to be a celebrity. I wanted to lead a luxurious life with all the money I could have- and actually, I was already living like a princess. Since young, I lived a sheltered life - getting driven around in a Mercedes Benz; my entire wardrobe boasting clothes from Converse to Zara to famous Europe brands like Fendi... In short, I was a pampered and molly-coddled teenager with everything I wanted.

Then there came a point in my life that turned my world upside down. Dad suddenly had anxiety attacks- it was depression. His temperament changed drastically; he became weak and frail and could not go out to crowded areas. He was mostly at home, meditating to calm himself down. For that period of time in my life, I was scared of losing him. However, things became worse and I got so tired of his ever-changing temper. One day, I simply shouted, "Could we not find a specialist doctor to cure you? Don't we have more than enough money to do that?"

The moment I said that, a string of events that I had never experienced happened. Mum started crying. Dad shook his head and just said, "I am really disappointed with myself for influencing you to think in such a wrong way" and then he strode out of the room. At that instant, I was shocked. I did not really know what I had said. I had always thought that money could buy anything I needed, anything I wanted. At such

dire circumstances, I thought money was our only solution. Then Mum spoke, “do you really think that money can cure Daddy? Is that really what you have been thinking about all your life, wealth? And are you certain that all the happiness you are getting now is because of the money you have? Can you buy all these happiness and love with money?”

At first, I was about to answer a ‘yes’. However, it dawned upon me that I was completely wrong. No, I could not use money to cure Dad- what Dad needed was not just intensive treatment under the doctor’s care, but more than enough love that could fill his heart so that he could be happy again. Money could not secure him the happiness he wanted right then, only love could do so. Then it got me thinking again. Am I really very happy with all the material wealth that had been showered upon me? Well, I was happy, but that was only because I had received all the love I needed from my parents, and not because I had all the fancy clothes. Finally, it hit me: Happiness did not come from money, it came from love.

Happiness is what you get when people give of themselves to others. No amount of material accomplishments can replace true happiness... This I Believe.